

THE WAR FOR THE UNION.

FROM WASHINGTON.

From Our Own Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, May 24, 1861.

The attempt of a cotemporary in your city, by seemingly confidential relations with the State Department, to give garbled and distorted information as to policy should be understood by the country. Two days ago, a long telegram displayed on the first page, with startling heading and the other crafts and subtleties of journal jugglery, was a stringing of improbabilities upon a slender thread of facts. What it had of truth was old, but its thickening fancies, which filled but the main material, were of fresh coinage and of fruitful product. There is not now, and has not been, the slightest reason to anticipate any serious troubles with any European Power, arising from our own home disturbances. All that we have of my Lord John Russell's Bunsby communications, or my Lord Palmerston's assumed premises and logical deductions therefrom, are not worth, in their real bearing upon the international question, the printer's ink which will be wasted on this page, if it should pass into type. Lord John is myopic and mythical about belligerents. Lord Palmerston thinks they may, and they may not; that the United States cannot divide without a contest, but perhaps will, after pitched battles and bloodshed. Who can be surprised that intelligent statesmen abroad had no faith in the continuance of our Government? The last days of the Buchanan nightmare went beyond even the estimated depths of infamy.

Our own Administration might have passed their earlier days more pleasantly to themselves and more profitably to the State than they did. While the country reeled on the edge of a precipice—while the foundations of the Constitution were rocked to their center forty days and forty nights, the visual potentates King Cotton and King Hay were both deposed and a provisional authority—the Blue Book and Patronage—reigned in their stead. The soldier of Fort Sumter fed his heroism on spare allowances of salt junk and sour bread, and the flag of Fort Pickens drooped languidly on its staff, as if in doubt whether it was to brave the battle and the breeze, or be gathered to the folds of an unmanly surrender. Governors and other officers of Territories, whose white population was to consist of the appointees themselves, with a sparse body-guard of nomadic hunters and transit emigrants, must be selected. Consuls to Ning Po and Kurule Islands stood, portmanteau in hand, ready to go down to the sea in ships to their destination. The Postmasters at Hickory Run and Huckleberry Hollow must read their titles clear to a four-years' possession. The Senate adjourned. It was not a day too soon. Then the lintstock was applied to the sheltered cannon of Fort Monroe, and then, with the boom of its discharge, shook the great heart of the nation, as the walls of Jericho trembled at the blast of the priestly ram's horns. Money and muskets rattled in a deafening chorus. Ah! he who has watched and prayed, feared, and almost fainted through tedious years of deferred hope, had in the joy of that exultant moment an overpayment of delight. The old soul still survived, slumbering but still alive; the old blood yet flowed in vein and artery, stagnating but sanguine and hot. This state, as for ten days is now a quarter of a century, is to be new to Great Britain and the Continent. The government is not effete; the nation is not nor can it be disintegrated; rebellion is not to be revolution. From the convulsion of insurrection there is not to be the calmness of a rebel Power, stable in character, and supported by a peaceable alliance with us. When Europe sees the last dollar devoted, and the latest man dedicated, of the 22,000,000 of the North, they will provoke no collision with a people thus resolved, and thus exasperated. In four months we have seen the depths of humiliation and the mountain summits of pride. The President and the people are thinking one thought and speaking one language. No Administration here could control or check this wide-spread enthusiasm, and no Ministry in England or France can so far make themselves the oracles of old-time barbarism as to war with a Government which carries the Orléans and the Cross at the head of armies to quell the dying struggles of a nearly-extinguished wrong. Diplomacy may weave its tissues, Cabinets may supply their craft, but the silky filament of the cocoon and the cotton fiber of the ball are as flimsy against strength as such weak devices against this mighty procession of a generation marching over the wrecks and ruins of ancient tyranny and exploded opinions. The *N. Y. Herald* may work out its callings. It may make itself the treacherous organ of a movement which it joined only to weaken and betray. It may stir up the disquiet of New-York, and deride the one idea of subjugating the Rebels by insinuating the other that we must capture in the attempt Liverpool and London. I do not care what may be the dispatches of Mr. Adams or Mr. Dayton. Mr. Gregory may ask questions, and Lord John Russell answer them. Louis Napoleon may nod significantly, and Count Walewski pick his teeth mysteriously. The rills and rivulets dry in sun or swollen in shower, are nothing. The tranquil flow of the mighty river goes on into the mighty ocean, under laws which are eternal to matter; and human life and human liberty, individual and aggregate, are alike subordinate to the behests of a Providence which guides and governs to right ends in the whisper of the still small voice or the roll of the thunder.

The city is sad and in mourning. An officer, whom all respected and many loved, was "done to death by felon hand" last night at Alexandria. Those who knew him best saw for him a bright career. He should have been, as we measure the future by our bounded intelligence, the Murat of the army. He is the dead warrior, waiting for the honors which belong to the brave, and the memory of those who die in a cause which divides, in its contemplation, sorrow for his fate with envy for his glory. I will not trust myself to speak of this cowardly assassination as I would. But there will be carcasses thrown to the dogs, to appease his manes. His is not a death to go unavenged. The wild men whom he subdued to gentleness and subordination by the influence which he exercised, will hang scalp to their girdles in a thirst for vengeance, which will be satisfied only with blood. And this letter, little worth as it may be in itself, I close with a thrill of pride that the last word I write is the name of Ellsworth.

HIGHLY IMPORTANT FROM THE SOUTH.

THE REAL CONDITION OF THE REBEL ARMY.

DISTRIBUTION OF THEIR FORCES.

Character of the Men, Compared with the Defenders of the Union.

From Our Special Correspondent.

RICHMOND, Wednesday, May 22, 1861.

I have just arrived here. It is the evening before the election. The nominal victory will doubtless be on the side of the Secessionists, except perhaps in Western Virginia. The leaders here except that the majority for the Union beyond the Alleghenies, will be very small.

The city is in the most fearful state of agitation. Troops from all parts of the South are arriving here every day, averaging 500 to 600 daily, so that for some time to come we may count on an increase of the Confederate army in Virginia at the rate of 4,000 per week. The whole number of troops in the State I estimate at about 30,000, distributed as follows: In Richmond and vicinity, 9,000; at Lynchburg, 3,000; at Harper's Ferry, 5,500; at Norfolk, 4,500, and in the other cities and villages of the State, 8,000. At the present rate of increase from the South the army will reach 50,000 a month hence.

On their arrival here the Southern troops are sent into camp near Richmond, or distributed to the various exposed points. Most of the troops are young, having scarcely reached adult age, entirely inexperienced, ill-clad, and ill-armed, but thus far tolerably well fed. They require much drill before they will be able even to present a respectable front in a pitched battle. The best portion of them is the militia of Richmond, Charleston, and other large cities, and this is a tolerably effective body of gentlemanly soldiery. But neither the majority of these inexperienced youth, nor the gentlemen soldiers, will be of much use in a military point of view for some time, and the only really formidable force is made up of the hardy troops of Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana, who have smelted powder in actual fight with the Indians and the Mexicans, and the soldiers of South Carolina who have been acclimated to war during the last five months at Charleston. These available troops comprise about one-third of the Virginian army, and are increasing in about that proportion, so that in a month there will be about 15,000 of them, and even more perhaps, as their superior effectiveness will no doubt suggest to the Confederate authorities the propriety of sending a proportionately larger number of these than of inferior troops. But we must not forget that the experience of these troops has been mainly in guerrilla warfare with the Indians and Mexicans, and that they have never yet been set face to face with a regular, well-organized army. They are excellent for scouting parties and for surprises, but before an enemy capable of scientific strategy they will be found to have but few military resources. The system, therefore, which will be employed against the Northern troops will most likely be that of guerrilla warfare, in which these troops will be in their element. No doubt the commanders will endeavor to give an appearance of scientific organization to their men; but it remains to be seen whether they will be able to make respectable troops out of their regiments of dashing adventurers.

The officers present a remarkable contrast to the soldiers. They are usually accomplished gentlemen, while the privates are inferior in every respect. I have many times heard here the statement that the army has efficient officers, but inefficient men. The efficiency, however, of the officers is exaggerated here. Lee, the General in command, is a cavalry officer, and a good engineer. He is a man who has the old Virginia traditions reproduced in the dignity and courtesy of his manners, and is a good representative of the gentlemanly military men of Virginia. Still, he is an inferior officer in vigor of mind and energy of character. The mildness of his disposition will lead him to prefer negotiations to battles. Generally speaking, the chief officers will go into battle, carried rather by the current of popular feeling than by any settled convictions in regard to any permanent separation from the North. The impression among these officers is, that there will be no great battle for some time to come, and that it will take several months to organize the army of the South, as well as the army of the North. While this half-pacific impression is prevalent among the officers, there is a sanguinary ardor among the troops of the West. With the exception of the gentlemanly soldiers of the large towns, the troops have a simple, half-idiotic appearance, with a dash of drunkenness and frivolity. While many of these poor boys have the appearance of having escaped from an insane asylum, a large number of the Western troops appear to have escaped from bagnes; but both are usually thin and lean, and form a very grotesque contrast with the rotund forms of the city gentlemen militia corps. Contrasting these with the troops of the North, we see the moral and intellectual degeneracy of the South in the most vivid colors. While the Northern troops come from among the laboring classes and bear in their appearance and character the stamp of that intelligence and vigor which is given by honorable labor, the troops of the South cannot be recruited from the laboring classes, since they are slaves, but they have to be made up mainly from the sons of the small planters, whose intellectual life is literally a life of vegetation, so that those poor unfortunate come into the world with the stupidity and idleness of their progenitors tainting their blood, reacting fearfully on physique, and producing a generation without energy and without intelligence, such as is seen in the interior of Virginia and of North Carolina. Especially in the ranks of the North Carolinians have I noticed absolutely idiotic faces; they are youthful Rip Van Winkles, who can be roused from their lethargy only by the opening of a brandy bottle or the discharge of a gun, or, in their language, "to take a drink or shoot somebody."

How can we imagine that the population which has been sleeping for half a century, while the North has been making continuous progress, can understand the principles and aims of the North? And how can we suppose that a country which enslaves its laboring class can create an organized army, when that can be done only in a country where the laboring class is free. Armies are furnished from the people, and in the South there is no people in the American and

European sense of the word. The people of the South are blacks, who cannot be used for armies.

While, then, on the one hand, the South is intellectually incapable of understanding the principles of the North, who is, on the other hand, physically incapable of forming armies, which can only be organized on a grand scientific scale in countries governed like the North by principles of liberty, which make labor honorable and idleness infamous. It will require a considerable time before the South will be able to comprehend the civilization even of the North, and in the mean time she will continue to judge the North according to her own ignominious views of civilization. The practical side of this is that the North has to do with an enemy which despises her, and which, without sufficient moral and intellectual perception to arrive at better conclusions, will treat the invaders of the South as robbers and brigands. Nor must we forget that the most sacred war-cry of the South—the cry of agony for "homes and firesides"—is a cry of fear for their property, a cry purely material and antipodal to the war-cry of the North, which is inspired by the elevated considerations of civilization.

The war for the South derives all its power from selfish, local, personal and transitory considerations; the war for the North derives its inspiration from moral, religious, permanent and universal principles; the former affect only a small colony of planters and their dependants, while the latter affect the whole human race. This distinction must be carefully made, in order to understand that the enthusiasm of the South is intrinsically factitious and transitory, since it does not have its source in those universal sentiments of justice and humanity which alone can legitimately inspire enthusiasm, while the enthusiasm of the North, so long as it continues to be fed from the original sources of the sublime principles of modern civilization, the principles of liberty and humanity, will increase day by day in intensity and force.

Nevertheless, this lack of conscience and of honest conviction and principle in the South, while it should be considered as a symptom of military weakness, will be for some time, particularly at the commencement of the war, a fertile source of brute force; and brute force is the only force which exists in the South as well as in the North. Only after a certain lapse of time will the lack of all moral, invigorating principle, present the impotency of the South in all its colossal proportions.

As to the Government at Montgomery, and usurping authorities generally, they seem to make a virtue of necessity, and to stand entirely on the defensive.

There is great fear here of an attack on Richmond. From time to time, scouting parties are sent out in all directions to the frontiers to scout the approach of the enemy, and it is feared that in case of attack the Federal troops would bombard the city, which they might easily do from the fine elevation at Hollywood Cemetery.

This fear is general among all except the troops, and consequently the city presents a half-mourning, half-gaiety appearance.

The alarm written on the faces of people in the streets, the numbers of citizens who have fled, with such of their property as they could carry, to the North, the desolate condition of business, the dearth of specie, the forced circulation of small bank bills of the denomination of fifty cents and a dollar, the rowdy and drunkenness of the new troops, all give a solemn aspect to affairs. Among the multitudes who throng the streets and the hotels in pursuit of news, are the melancholy faces of Virginia politicians whose occupation at Washington is gone, and who perceive, now too late, the frightful mistake which they have made. Merchants, pale as death and fearing to breathe even lest their breath may betray the agency of their Anti-Secessionist hearts, or less dangerous but not less painful agony arising from the alarming state of their balance sheets, glide along in the crowd like phantoms. The ladies who promenade the principal streets look sad and anxious, and render the mournful appearance of the place still more mournful.

But the gaiety of the city is not less striking. Recruits with or without uniform are parading the streets at all hours; at every step almost there are halls where they are drilled, every train from the South adds hundreds to their numbers, and the railroad depot is a scene of constant excitement. The populace of Richmond, a mixture of blacks and whites, forms an almost impassable mass at these stations, and troops and travelers on leaving the cars have to force their way through these human barricades. From the railroad the troops go to the hotels, and every day they invade the dining rooms by hundreds, without paying for their dinners. As these boys almost without exception are tobacco-chewers, their presence soon creates a perfect gutter of filth, and to see from a little distance a mass of these dirty, tobacco-chewing, drinking, swearing, smoking, fetid troops, almost leads one to think that the swamps of the Carolinas have become locomotive swamps, as it were, made flesh, and flesh putrid with the exhalation of centuries of dirt and filth. Still the general effect is that of gaiety, for swamps laugh like fools.

The roads leading to Richmond from every side are alive with military. I have traveled through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Alabama, and everywhere heard the same cry, "To arms," "To arms," but there are not many arms. However, we must not despise even a despicable enemy. At every station a mob, including numbers of uniformed volunteers, surrounded the cars and scrutinized the passengers. In North Carolina there was less excitement, and at Wilmington I found very little. But as I approached Virginia it increased, and at Petersburg the whole population was in the streets, the poor blacks looking on aghast at the earthquake of agitation and war which their race has produced.

One cannot leave Richmond without a pass from the Governor, and thenceforward the excitement increases until it attains its climax at Gordonsville and Manassas Gap, where the road branches off to Harper's Ferry. Most of the passengers are troops; about each village there are encampments, and in the streets one only sees young men half wild, half drunk, making a terrible noise, and parading like children at play. Near Alexandria it is more quiet, the neighborhood of the Federal troops having produced a salutary influence.

Harper's Ferry is the point where hostilities are soonest expected, and among the troops there are many renegade Marylanders and many South Carolinians. The Western troops are employed on the most dangerous posts and missions,

while the general army guards the less exposed points. Scouting parties watch all the approaches into Virginia, from one end to the other, and they are especially vigilant at Norfolk and Harper's Ferry.

Jeff. Davis, with his Cabinet and Congress, will be there in July, and probably the war will not commence in earnest before then. Virginia is too weak in her faith in Secession to maintain her position, even had she a formidable army for her defense. The Montgomerists must be here to strengthen her in her political position, and above all she needs the strength of the faith in Secession possessed by the disciples of Calhoun; for they alone have a faith, in the justice of the injustice of the Secession cause deep enough to give a moral force to their immoral movement.

In the mean while, the Federal Government must not cross the borders of Virginia, unless it can do so with an overwhelming force, say 30,000 men, from three different directions, and that without weakening the garrison at Washington. We must not strike until we can strike with perfect certainty of success.

Interesting from Richmond.

Correspondence of the N. Y. Tribune.

RICHMOND, Va., May 22, 1861.

To-morrow the force of taking the vote of the people of this section of the Commonwealth, on the question of ratifying the Secession Ordinance, will be played, and I have no doubt the result will be eminently satisfactory to the Secession overzeers of the white slaves of Eastern Virginia. Their arrangements to achieve the object they have in view are as perfect as they can make them, although the means they resort to prove that they have some fears of the failure of their darling cause, when placed before the people, even though the latter will be the recipients of the most coercive style of operations, for in addition to their threats of expulsion from the State against all who vote against the Ordinance of Secession, they are, by their characteristic terrorism, extracting pro-secession speeches and letters from leading men who, both in sentiment and feeling, are opposed to the revolutionary despotism that at present rules them, these speeches and letters being intended for effect at the polls to-morrow. As soon as the Unionists, throughout the State, including those who have been compelled, for the time being, to uphold the cause of Secession, find that the true men of the Western counties are moving actively for the Union—and the fact that they are so cannot much longer be kept from the knowledge of the people of the East—and that the power of the Federal Government will soon be in the midst of them, to sustain a completely true among them who wish to free themselves from the Jeff. Davis usurpation, they will promptly repudiate the position into which they have been forced by the current pressure of the despotism they now suffer from, and give utterance to the inherent love for the Union that now exists in the breast of many a quasi Secessionist. Senator Mason's recent letter is a most prominent paper for use at the polls to-morrow, and so is Judge Lyon's late charge to the Grand Jury of this city, wherein he says that:

"Any citizen or resident of Virginia who now adheres to the United States, giving the Government thereof, or its officers aid or comfort, in guilty treason, furnishing information or intelligence, money, arms, ammunition, provisions, or any assistance, whether gratuitously or for reward, is guilty of treason, and shall be liable to the punishment of death."

Mason advocates the expulsion from the State of all those who do not vote in favor of Secession; he will not even let those remain who do not vote at all, claiming that all who are not with them are against them. The following placard has been issued, and will be posted conspicuously to-day throughout the city:

"Let every true Virginian remember the election to-morrow, and by his vote ratify the act of the Sovereign Convention, which frees our glorious State from the galling traditions of Northern Despotism."

The arrangements for taking the vote to-morrow have been placed entirely in the hands of the precipitating Secessionists of the three wards of this city, "Jefferson," "Madison," and "Monroe." Jefferson Ward, in particular, having one or two slave auctioneers as inspectors of the district. This latter ward is in the lower part of the city, and the majority of its voters are among the working classes of the community, and in consequence it has always hitherto given Union majorities. Madison Ward, the middle district, includes the aristocratic and mercantile community of Richmond, and, as a matter of course, is out-and-out in favor of Secession. Monroe Ward, in the upper part of the city, contains a large foreign population, in which the Teutonic element preponderates, and this also is, or was, a Union district, but the "corrosive" measures of the Secessionists will have as much effect here, I presume, as in the lower ward, and but few will dare give expression to their true sentiments at the polls to-morrow. The polls of the lower ward are held in Jefferson Market; those of the middle ward in the City Hall; and in the upper ward at Lucy's blacksmith's shop on Broad street, near First street.

The are but few military companies in this city now, in comparison with what passed through; in fact there are none but these unprepared, in their equipments, for departure, and those who temporarily adjourn here en route from the South. Of the latter, the latest arrival is that of a regiment of Tennessee, numbering about 800 men, under the command of Col. W. B. Bate, a Tennessee lawyer. Capt. Clesky, a Washington Secessionist, commands one of the companies. The troops recently emigrated here in such force have been sent to the border of the State, some departing by the York River Railroad, others by the Fredericksburg and Potomac route, and others again—the most numerous parties—by the Central Railroad.

Early yesterday morning one of the numerous alarms of fire, now of nightly occurrence here, was occasioned by the burning of a portion of Bayle & Gamble's saw factory. It was set on fire, it appears, the act being a preconcerted one on the part of some persons whom *The Dispatch* terms "Republican hirelings and ruffians." I merely allude to the fact as an illustration of the feeling—now having but a smothered existence—among the unemployed working-classes of this city, whose sympathies are largely in favor of the Union, this latent feeling being a burning thirst for vengeance on the heads of their dastardly oppressors.

It appears that a party of men attacked and mistreated the watchman of the building, and then set fire to it, they having previously, however, torn down the Secession flag that was flying from the roof. Bayle & Gamble had recently entered into the manufacture of swords for the Secession army, and this fact roused the ire of the aforementioned "hireling ruffians."

The Dispatch termed the fellows who set fire to the Baltimore bridges "the noble patriots of Maryland." It is privately reported here that the bridges crossing the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg have been so cut and prepared as to be easily destroyed on the approach of Federal forces via Aquia Creek. While the workmen were employed in effecting this preparation, last week, a portion of one of the bridges gave way, prematurely, but it has since been replaced.

It was reported at *The Enquirer* office, this morning, that ex-Gov. Wise was dangerously ill, from nervous fever, brought on by the excitement he has of late been laboring under, while advancing the cause of the revolutionary despots who now control his native State.

FROM FORTRESS MONROE.

Movements of Gen. Butler—The Sewall's Point Alarm.

From Our Special Correspondent.

FORTRESS MONROE, OLD POINT, Va., May 24, 1861.

I took the steamer at Baltimore last evening, and reached this theater of stirring events at an early hour this morning. The steamer *Admiral* had arrived during the night, and the *Troy Regiment*, Col. Carr, were disembarking. The beach for some distance was alive with strolling troops just landed, and even at that hour the Forts and vicinity presented an animated scene. Gen. Butler came down two days ago, and is now fully established at his headquarters within the Fort. His appointment as commanding officer of the post is well received by both regulars and volunteers, and is probably as good a one as could have been made under the circumstances. Energetic, and having a quick eye to means with reference to results, he has already infused a spirit of activity into every department here.

Yesterday was marked by a stirring incident. Gen. Butler, desiring to know the precise lay of the land about the Forts, concluded to pay a visit to the neighboring village of Hampton. Col. Phelps's fine regiment of Vermonters were detailed for the reconnaissance, and they took up the march across the dyke and bridge leading from the Forts to the Hampton side of the Bay. Observing the movement, the rebels rushed down to the bridge, and with combustibles ready, prepared to set fire to it. At this the advance guard of the Vermonters took the double quick step, and before the fire had made much headway were down on the burning bridge and rebels. The latter fled precipitately, and the former were soon reelected from destruction. A field-piece which the rebels had planted in the neighborhood, was unceremoniously pitched into the bay. Gen. Butler pushed on and completed the reconnaissance, to the infinite disgust of the rebels, and, probably, of John Tyler in particular, whose villa is not far distant. The ground for the permanent encampment was selected on the farm of Mr. Segor, at the end of the bridge, and to-day the first permanent occupation of the soil of Virginia was made by Capt. Carr's and Col. Phelps's Regiments, who went into encampment there, to be followed by other troops as they arrive. This will, no doubt, greatly heighten the disgust of the rebels.

The affair of Sewall's Point, on Sunday and Monday last, was one of no inconsiderable importance, both as an exploit and for its results. It has been systematically falsified by the Rebel accounts, and I will therefore give the incidents as they actually occurred. On Sunday, the Star (late Monticello), with three guns, commanded by Captain Eagle, but of which Lieutenant Brain is the executive officer, made a reconnaissance of the Point, and fired a few effective shots. On Monday the Star returned to the work. Taking up a position about eight hundred yards distant, she opened a fire with shot and shell. The manner in which the guns were served may be inferred from the fact that in the space of one hour and three-quarters, which was the duration of the conflict, the three guns fired one hundred and fourteen shots. The Rebels had four guns in position. They put seven shots into the Star, but they being from rifled six-pounders did little harm. An explosive shot of the same dimensions lodged in Lieutenant Brain's stateroom, and of course tore up things generally. Had it been an eight or ten-inch shell the effect would have been much greater, and perhaps decisive. As it was, the Star received no material damage. No one was hurt on her except the powder boy, who was slightly scratched by a splinter. Three of the Rebel guns were dismounted. The batteries were nearly destroyed, and would have been wholly so but for nightfall. In addition, it is ascertained, on what is believed to be reliable authority, that six of their men were killed and several wounded.

It was a daring and successful exploit, and reflected great credit on the officers of the Star, and particularly on Lieut. Brain, her former commander and present executive officer. It is proper to state that the Freedom contributed to the result by firing a number of shots, though under circumstances which, while they reflected credit on the officers, did not allow her to play as prominent a part as she doubtless will on the first occasion that offers. She will not have to wait long.

A reconnaissance shows that the Rebels have since reconstructed the batteries, and placed a dozen or more guns in position. An expedition will be sent against them shortly, though not till men enough arrive to enable Gen. Butler to hold the position. The demonstration will be both by land and water. The Mississippi (to arrive) will, it is understood, tow up the Cumberland, and with her take up a position at a convenient distance, other vessels of the fleet occupying positions according to circumstances, while a strong land force assaults the batteries in the rear. The undertaking will be quite a formidable one, and will be planned on a scale that will place its success beyond doubt.

The coast from Sewall's Point to Norfolk is lined with batteries, which must in turn be captured. It is understood that the rebels, to the number of 3,000, are entrenched at York. They are said to have several heavy guns in position, and their plan is to occupy what may be termed the strategic line at the narrowest point between James and York Rivers, and from which it will become necessary to dislodge them. For what a large army is to be concentrated here is now apparent.

Gen. Butler, accompanied by several experienced officers of the Forts, will this afternoon make a somewhat extended reconnaissance in the rear of the fort, and of the country back of Hampton. Gradually, these reconnaissances will be extended, and the precise position and force of the Rebels definitely ascertained.

Gen. Butler's command consists of something more than 2,000 men. This number will be swelled by fresh arrivals within the next twenty-four hours, and within the next ten days will be further increased, probably to not less than 15,000 men.

The blockading fleet is now really formidable, including as it does, the splendid steamer *Minnesota*, the *Cumberland*, the *Star*, the *Quaker City*, the *Yankee*, and some other steamers of light draught. Prices continue to be made, as there is no escaping the long, pivot guns of these ships. In another letter I will undertake to give a full list of the fleet on the waters of the Chesapeake. The *Harriet Lane* has been left to maintain the blockade at Charleston.

The six negroes which escaped from Cape Henry fisheries, on board the blockading vessel *Quaker City*, were brought in to Flag-Officer Stratham, and by him delivered to the authorities of Norfolk. Several runaways have made application for assistance and protection at our picket-guard, but have been sent away by the Massachusetts sentinels on post. This sentiment touching the negro, and this disposition to show that the Government have no desire to interfere with the peculiar institution, have been all very well, but since war has actually commenced and the ambition of the Confederate States is to injure the peculiar institution of the North (commerce), I cannot but believe that the true policy of the Government is to let the nigger alone, and decline rendering any more assistance on his account. Again, the negro must now be regarded as contraband, since every able-bodied hand not absolutely required on the plantations, is impressed by the enemy into the military service, as a laborer on the various fortifications. Every negro we return, or refuse to take, is one more sent to work against us, and I therefore think the sooner we commence making them work for us the better.

An officer from Florida, where he has been spending the Winter, on sick leave, recently returned here. His statements of the excitements on the route, and the annoying detentions and examinations to which he was subjected, make it evident that the reason and law have entirely lost their way, and that all the towns along the route are under the control of a mob.

The Mayors of cities were, in many cases, powerless to aid them, but were compelled to submit, in many

cases, to the decision of an excited multitude, rendered by a viva voce vote in the street. In one case, where he was threatened with hanging, there were officers, formerly of the United States service, who knew him well, but did not volunteer one word in his behalf. Such is the demoralization caused by the present condition of affairs, that we find officers who were considered, when in the Army and Navy, men of the most honorable sentiments, doing things which at that time would have caused them lasting disgrace among their comrades.

We are now well supplied with provisions and stores, and by the arrival of the *Peabody* a few days since, received some twenty-five head of beef cattle. A schooner arrived on the 20th from Baltimore, laden with fresh supplies for the soldier, and a thousand quantities of notions for sale to the volunteers. The arrival of the *Boyman* has furnished the post with a large quantity of lumber and hay.

Since I left the fort, two weeks since, Lieut. Tallmadge and Taylor have each been promoted to a captaincy. It was a just but tardy recognition of the merits of these gentlemen. Capt. Tallmadge is the Assistant-Quartermaster, and Assistant-Adjutant-General of the post, a position of responsibility for which he is abundantly qualified. Captain Taylor is Commissary for the post. He is a son of Col. Taylor, brother of the late President Taylor. The Colonel married a daughter of the late Judge McLean. Capt. Tallmadge is son of the late Senator Tallmadge, and several years was on Gen. Worth's staff.

A YANKEE IN ALEXANDRIA.

Capture of a Secession Flag.

Correspondence of the N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, May 23, 1861.

I have already apprised you by telegraph of the leading features of the bold and dangerous achievement of a Boston banker, which resulted in the taking of a "Confederate" flag. The details will be found highly interesting and exciting. On Tuesday, Mr. Charles E. Fuller, accompanied by his brother, W. J. A. Fuller, a prominent New-York lawyer, spent the day in looking about Alexandria, having no purpose except a curiosity to see what Virginia troops looked like. They registered their real names and residence, and, of course, were marked men from that moment. After a thorough exploration of the city, they dined at the hotel, with about fifty officers of the Secession army, and the elder brother took the last stage for Washington, which he reached that night without any striking adventure. The younger brother declared his determination to bring home the only Secession flag that was flying in the place, if he could not stand it—to see the rebel bunting streaming defiantly in full sight of the Capitol, and have it he would, at any hazard. No persuasion could make him forego the rash attempt. He took a room at the hotel—the Marshall House—where the proprietor kept the flag flying, swearing he would "make a bloody old Secessionist, and Lincoln could not make him haul it down." He expressed a strong desire to see any "4-d Yankees" attack that flag. Mr. F. got exceedingly irate at this boast, and thought he would let him know that Massachusetts men had more pluck than was credited them by the "Chivalry." The hotel is a large four-story building, and was filled with Secession troops. Mr. F. by a little address management, from a room assigned him in the main building, from the roof of which the flag-staff ran up through an open scuttle. After tea he propped his way toward the roof, and found the upper doors locked. He then climbed the nearest window, eight or ten feet above the stairway, and found it nailed down. He bought a hammer at a hardware store, went back and drew the nails. Being a perfect gymnast, and active as a cat, he expected to climb to the roof by the spout, but this proved rotten as paper, and he compelled him to abandon the attempt. He next searched about the city and found a locksmith, whom he told that he wanted a bunch of keys to open a closet. The man offered to go with him and fit the lock, but Mr. F. "did not see it" in that light. He said he would not trouble him for so, but would take a bunch of keys, and leave five dollars deposit for their return.

Armed with ten keys, he returned to the hotel, watched like a cat for his opportunity, and when the coast was clear ascended to the upper story, and tried his keys. Six of them were tried unsuccessfully, and the seventh had turned the lock, when he was nearly surprised by a party of soldiers who came up the stairs. He rushed into a sort of dark closet adjoining, secreted himself under a mattress, and waited with breathless anxiety until they passed into the next room, where they soon became absorbed in a lively game of "poker," at five cents "ante." He then went back, unlocked the door, fell his way in the dark to the flag-staff, tied the signal halyard, found that everything worked beautifully, and that he was sure, at least, of hauling down the flag. He mounted to the roof, and took a general survey of the premises. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. The streets were full of citizens and troops, and the full moon shone bright as day. He was again alarmed by a party of soldiers mounting the stairs, and feared that the slight lowering and raising of the flag, when he was trying the halyards, had been observed from the streets. He stood behind the door, determined to jump by the first corner and over the heads of those coming after, and make a run for the dock, some four or five blocks off, jump in and swim to the Pawnee. The Massachusetts boys of the 5th Regiment, who know him well, say that "Hap" may be seen on foot to catch Charlie." Happily the troops went into another room. He then went toward the river to alter the moorings of a small vessel, so that her change of position might signify to his brother, who had converted to cover his swim toward the Pawnee, that the boat could approach within hail. He was turned back, by sentinels at every street approaching the river. The whole shore was guarded. He then determined to go back to the hotel, haul down the flag, and trust to the chapter of accidents. After a careful reconnaissance, at about 10 o'clock, when every body's attention was engaged by the passing of three cavalry companies, he hauled down the flag, cut the halyards, and made them fast to the cleat that they might not be observed swinging loosely. To his horror he discovered that he had caught an elephant. The flag was over 30 feet long, and about 15 feet wide. He took off his coat, vest, and pants, and commenced winding the flag about his body. To use his own expression, he thought he never should get it all coiled away. He succeeded, however, by making a sort of Daniel Lambert of himself, in tying up his pants and coat, so as to effectually hide the piratical emblem. He marched down stairs, got out of the house, without exciting suspicion, and started on his travels. Critical as was his position, with the river bank lined with sentries, and the picket-guard extended to Long Bridge, where he knew the draw was raised, it soon became perilous in the extreme, by a general alarm, which was given in consequence of the fact that the flag was missed. He saw patrolmen rushing in every direction, so he concluded to conceal himself in an old shed, until the moon should be obscured by passing clouds, when he determined to push for the back country, make a circuit about the town, and swim across to Ellsworth's Zouave camp, where fires he could plainly see. He saw his brother's boat (with a detachment of twelve men from the Massachusetts fish), lying off in the middle of the river, but dared not halt here, for fear of causing his certain arrest. He managed to push from picket to picket, by way of advance, at one time lying flat on his back for half-an-hour, while the guard was smoking within a few feet of him, until he broke cover in the open country, beyond the suburbs, when the moon shone out brightly, and he found himself suddenly confronted by two sentries. He made a rush to pass one by the both of them seized him. He grasped one by the breast and threw him to the ground with such violence that he wrenched off one of the Virginia bayonets, which he now wears on his watch-guard as a trophy. The other sentry dropped his gun